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SUBJECT: TFIZ01: DART AN NASIRIYAH TRIP REPORT 1 - 2 MAY

SUMMARY

11. Between 1 and 2 May, the DART traveled to An Nasiriyah. Accompanied by GOAL and IMC, the DART visited two hospitals and local water and sewage treatment facilities. The DART attended the CMOC briefing on 2 May, during which, local leaders presented the town's most critical needs: food, propane, hospital security, and medicines. End Summary.

HEALTH

12. The DART toured An Nasiriyah's Maternal and Pediatric Hospital on 1 May. All patients had been discharged five to six hours before the hospital was hit by a bomb. As a result of the damage, 40 of the hospital's 300 beds are not available, but the hospital is operational. The current patient breakdown is 40 percent OB/GYN and 60 percent pediatric. Most of the pediatric patients are suffering from gastro-intestinal problems (water-borne diseases) and upper respiratory infections. Prior to the war, the hospital reportedly performed 3,000 surgical procedures per month. Now between 200 and 400 surgeries are performed per month. There are now 400 vaginal deliveries, 300 caesarian sections, and 200 other gynecological surgeries per month. Fewer than one third of the hospital's incubators are functional.

13. Most of the hospital's staff has returned to work, including eight OB/GYN physicians, eleven pediatricians, five anesthesia personnel, eight nurse midwives, and 70 nurses. The hospital only has the capacity to provide intermittent salaries to some of the staff. Potable water is available by tanker and non-potable water though the municipal water system. There are no laboratory culture capabilities, and the pharmaceutical supplies are being rapidly depleted. The hospital's main problems are poor night-time security, only one anesthesia machine, a lack of re-training for staff, and a lack of oxygen. Oxygen (medical-grade by local standards) is available from a local contractor at seven times the normal price. The International Medical Corps (IMC) expects to have a master list of all supplies needed in all three of An Nasiriyah's hospitals by 5 May.

14. The DART also visited the Republic Hospital, which mainly treated emergency, dialysis, and urology cases. The 100-bed hospital has been almost completely destroyed by a combination of bomb damage and looting. Almost all of the windows in the hospital were broken. However, according to the hospital's director, the facility was in very poor condition even before the war. There were four patients in the hospital's two open wards during the DART's visit. According to the hospital director, eight operations were performed in the last week. The hospital has only two respirators and no oxygen. Air has been used as a substitute in the respirators for the past two weeks. The hospital's laboratory closes at noon each day due to the lack of staff. All three of the hemodialysis units were looted, forcing the hospital to resort to peritoneal dialysis. However, the hospital has only a very small supply of the catheters necessary for the peritoneal dialysis. The three looted hemodialysis units were the only three in the entire governorate of 1.5 million people. The hospital's infectious disease unit is inoperable as the door for the isolation room was looted.

15. According to GOAL, An Nasiriyah's water and sewage treatment plant would require only small interventions to become operable. The staff is available and ready to work. The DART visited the plant's administrative offices, where all the doors, windows, and furniture were looted. The DART also visited the sewage treatment facility, which is operating at between 30 and 70 percent of capacity because of a lack of maintenance and spare parts. Since before the war, the facility has been relying on temporary pumps as there are no parts to repair the permanent pumps. Due to the use of the temporary pumps, the system is being bypassed and wastewater is being released untreated.

16. The DART also visited the water treatment plant, where only seven out of the fourteen pumps are operating. As a result, the plant has no standby capacity. The plant has less than one week's supply of chlorine left, according to GOAL.

FUEL

17. On 1 May, GOAL reported that the supply of propane gas is virtually non-existent in An Nasiriyah. On 23 April, looters broke into the propane factory, manually opened the valves, and filled bottles with propane, leaving a dangerous residue of sulphur and vapor in the tanks. On 29 April, two people were killed and two more seriously burned, when looters attempted to break into the pipeline to fill bottles manually.

18. GOAL is attempting to confirm whether the propane plant in Basrah is operational and what capacity it has. If the plant is operating, GOAL is considering organizing trucks and bottles to go to Basrah in order to supply An Nasiriyah. Prior to the war, An Nasiriyah's propane consumption level was 11,000 bottles per day. GOAL believes that any propane supplies to An Nasiriyah must consist of at least 5,000 bottles per day, to avoid civil unrest.

CIVIL MILITARY OPERATIONS CENTER MEETING

19. The DART attended the daily Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) briefing on 2 May. Several City Council leaders told the DART that propane was needed desperately in An Nasiriyah. Food was also named as a priority need; food items such as milk and cheese are unavailable. However, there are sufficient supplies of dry foods available. Employees have gone three months without pay. According to the city's hospital director, security is the hospital's priority need. Medicines are also needed, and what drugs are available are of a very low quality. Contact with other centers is also difficult because of the lack of operational communications equipment.

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